

ROMANIA CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Women greet each other with a handshake, or a kiss on each cheek if they are good friends. Handshakes are more common among men. Generally, a man waits for a woman to extend her hand first.

When greeting, women often use the phrase *Bună* (Good), while men and young people say *Salut* (Salutation). Young people might also say *Ceau* (Ciao) or *Servus*. In cities, a man might greet a woman by kissing her hand. Or he may simply say *Sărut mâna* (I kiss your hand) as a sign of reverence. Young people also use this greeting with their parents or elders.

The most common verbal greeting is *Bună ziua* (Good day), though *Bună dimineata* (Good morning) and *Bună seara* (Good evening) are also used.

Gestures:

When one sneezes, family or close friends may say *Sanatate* (Good health) or *Noroc* (Good luck). *Noroc* is also used at parties to mean “Cheers.”

Making eye contact during conversation is a sign of honesty.

It is impolite for men to keep their hands in their pockets when speaking in formal situations.

People also avoid chewing gum during conversation.

Friends often hold hands or walk arm in arm. Gentlemen remove their hats before entering churches and buildings other than stores. People also remove gloves before shaking hands. Many women cover their heads when entering a church.

Holidays:

Most people celebrate Christian holidays according to the Orthodox calendar. New Year's (1–2 Jan.) is one of the most popular holidays. Christmas (25 Dec.) is both a children's holiday and a feasting holiday. Easter celebrations include a midnight candle lighting and family feasts. For *Mărțișor* (1 Mar.), men give women and girls small brooches. Also celebrated are Women's Day (8 Mar.), Labor Day (1–2 May), and Children's Day (1 June). Romania's National Day (1 Dec.) marks the proclamation of Romania as a unified state in 1918. On certain days (such as Wednesdays and Fridays), on some religious holidays, or before Christmas or Easter, Orthodox Romanians may fast; or they may not eat or cook any animal products, sometimes for as long as 40 days.